

IX. ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETIC COMPETITION

A student's eligibility for interscholastic athletics shall be in the public school district of the parent's residence in accordance with applicable residence rules. Eligibility for specific Fort Smith School attendance zones will be governed by the current attendance and transfer policies of the Fort Smith School District.

In District Transfers

A student who chooses to transfer schools within the district and who is entering the eighth, ninth, eleventh, or twelfth grade will lose athletic eligibility for that school year unless the student attended the receiving school the entire previous year. If a ninth grade student entering the tenth grade desires to transfer out of his attendance zone, that student must inform the Fort Smith Public Schools' Director of Athletics and Student Activities. If a student has made a legal transfer to a school in 7th grade or 10th grade by July 1 then chooses to return to his/her home attendance area school, eligibility will be lost for 365 days.

A ninth grade student may participate in a sport not offered at his/her junior high school. If a ninth grade student desires to transfer out of his/her attendance area to participate in athletics not offered at his/her junior high school, the following conditions must be met:

1. The student must be granted an Attendance Area Exception from Student Services for the following school year. The Attendance Area Exception will take effect the fall semester of the tenth grade year.
2. The student and his/her parent or guardian must sign a Declaration of Intent with the Fort Smith Public Schools Director of Athletics and Student Activities.

If the student returns to his/her home attendance area, athletic eligibility will be lost for 365 days. If a ninth grade student entering the tenth grade desires to transfer out of his/her attendance zone, that student must inform the Fort Smith Public Schools Director of Athletics and Student Activities. If the student has made a legal transfer to a school in the 7th grade or 10th grade by July 1 and then chooses to return to his/her home attendance area school, eligibility will be lost for 365 days.

Likewise, if a 9th grade student plays for the high school team in their attendance area and later decides to transfer to a high school outside their home attendance area, athletic eligibility will be lost for 365 days.

Hardship Exception: A student's parent or guardian may petition the District's athletic director for a hardship exception from the specified eligibility rules. Evidence of a true hardship must be presented. A hardship is defined as an extreme and unusual circumstance beyond the control of the student or parent. After consultation with principals of the affected schools, the athletic director may deny the petition or may grant a hardship exception. Denial of a hardship exception petition will be reviewed by the Superintendent upon parent request; the decision reached in the review is final.